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Message Text

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47
ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NEA-06 SAJ-01 SR-02 ORM-01 IO-03

SCA-01 VO-01 L-01 RSC-01 /040 W
---------- 023419
R 241119Z DEC 74
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5664
INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 18971

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: CVIS UR PFOR SREF
SUBJ: SOVIET JEWISH EMIGRANTS WHO "CHANGE DIRECTIONS"

REF: (A) STATE 259199; (B) STATE 267514; (C) MOSCOW 18329

1. SUMMARY. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, OVER ONE THIRD OF SOVIET EMIGRANTS WITH EXIT VISAS FOR ISRAEL NOW "CHANGE DIRECTIONS" ONCE OUT OF USSR AND PROCEED TO COUNTRIES OTHER THAN ISRAEL FOR SETTLEMENT. AS REFLECTED REFS A AND B, ISRAELIS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBLE ADVERSE SOVIET REACTION TO THIS PHENOMENON, FEARING SOVIETS MIGHT FIND IT NECESSARY TO TAKE CORRECTIVE ACTION, OR USE PHENOMENON AS PRETEXT TO RESTRICT JEWISH EMIGRATION. DUTCH EMBASSY IN MOSCOW, WHICH REPRESENTS ISRAEL, SHARES SIMILAR VIEW (REF C). OUR VIEW IS THAT ISRAELI AND DUTCH FEAR IS EXAGGERATED; WE BELIEVE SOVIETS ARE FULLY AWARE OF PHENOMENON AND, FOR REASONS NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR, ACQUIESCE AND SEEM TO PREFER ISSUING EXIT VISAS FOR ISRAEL TO US-BOUND JEWS RATHER THAN GRANT THEM EXIT VISAS FOR U.S.. END SUMMARY.

2. IN RECENT YEARS EXIT VISAS FOR ISRAEL CONSISTENTLY HAVE BEEN MORE READILY OBTAINABLE THAN EXIT VISAS FOR U.S., EVEN DURING YOM KIPPUR WAR. SOVIET AUTHORITIES OBVIOUSLY ARE AWARE THAT PORTION OF EMIGRANTS WHO APPLY FOR AND OBTAIN EXIT VISAS FOR ISRAEL PLAN TO GO INSTEAD TO U.S. AND OTHER COUNTRIES. WE HAVE
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HEARD OF SOME INSTANCES IN WHICH OVIR ADVISED SUCH PERSONS TO

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APPLY FOR EXIT VISAS FOR ISRAEL IN ORDER TO GO TO U.S. SUBJECTS OF SOME OF OUR REPRESENTATION LIST CASES WHO HAD BEEN REFUSED EXIT VISAS FOR U.S. REPEATEDLY HAVE TURNED UP IN ROME AFTER OBTAINING EXIT VISAS FOR ISRAEL.

3. WE HAVE NOT HEARD THROUGH WELL-DEVELOPED JEWISH GRAPEVINE OF ANY CASES IN WHICH FAMILIES WERE HARASSED OR CRITICIZED BY ANY SOVIET AUTHORITIES FOR INTENDING TO CHANGE DIRECTIONS, OR FOR HAVING PRO-FORMA U.S. VISA STAMP IN EXIT DOCUMENTATION FOR ISRAEL. IF SOVIET OFFICIALS EXHIBITED SUCH DISPLEASURE, JEWISH COMMUNITY WOULD HEAR ABOUT IT QUICKLY AND WOULD INFORM EMBASSY AND CORRESPONDENTS. INSTEAD, NUMBEROUS EMIGRANTS WITH EXIT VISAS FOR ISRAEL CONTINUE TO COME TO CONSULAR SECTION REQUESTING PRO-FORMA STAMP OR, RECENTLY, EMBASSY LETTER RE APPLYING IN ROME. MILITIA CONTINUES TO ADMIT TO AMEMBASSY CONSULAR SECTION ANY SOVIETS WITH EXIT VISAS FOR ISRAEL, AND THERE IS NO DOUBT MILITIA AND KGB KNOW PURPOSE OF SUCH VISITS.

4. THE ABOVE INDICATES TO US THAT, AT LEAST TO DATE, THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT IS NOT UPSET ABOUT JEWISH EMIGRANTS OBTAINING EXIT VISAS FOR ISRAEL AND GOING ELSEWHERE. GIVEN USUAL SOVIET PREOCCUPATION WITH LEGALISMS AND ORDER, IT IS NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR WHY SOVIETS SEEM TO FIND IT MORE TOLERABLE TO GRANT EXIT VISA FOR ISRAEL TO SOVIET JEW WISHING TO GO TO U.S., RATHER THAN GIVE HIM EXIT VISA FOR U.S. ONE THEORY AMONG FOREIGNERS HERE IS THAT EXIT VISAS FOR ISRAEL AND FRG CAN BE CATEGORIZED AS ETHNIC REPATRIATION, SIMILAR IN NATURE TO ARMENIAN REPATRIATION TO ARMENIAN SSR. INCREASE IN ETHNIC REPATRIATION EMIGRATION CAN BE DISTINGUISHED FROM GENERAL EMIGRATION ACCORDING TO PERSONAL CHOICE, I.E., FACT THAT THOUSANDS OF JEWS CAN GO TO ISRAEL DOES NOT SUGGEST THAT THOUSANDS OF RUSSIANS, UKRAINIANS, BALTS, ETC. CAN EMIGRATE TO US OR ELSEWHERE SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY WISH TO.

5. IT MAY BE THAT FACT THAT EMIGRANTS WHO OBTAIN EXIT VISAS FOR ISRAEL RENOUNCE SOVIET CITIZENSHIP AS PART OF PROCEDURE IS ALSO FACTOR IN SOVIET ATTITUDE. APPLICANTS FOR EXIT VISAS TO U.S. DO NOT FACE SUCH REQUIREMENT AND GO TO U.S. RETAINING SOVIET CITIZENSHIP. WE DOUBT THAT GAMESMANSHIP OF BUILDING UP STATISTICS OF EXIT VISAS ISSUED FOR ISRAEL IS A FACTOR. DUTCH
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CONSUL RESPONSIBLE FOR ISSUANCE OF ISRAELI ENTRY VISAS IN MOSCOW SPECULATED RECENTLY THAT, AT LEAST IN ONE RESPECT, SOVIETS MAY DERIVE SOME BENEFIT FROM GROWING NUMBER OF JEWISH EMIGRANTS CHOOSING DESTINATIONS OTHER THAN ISRAEL: HE FELT SOVIETS COULD CITE THIS
TREND TO ARAB GOVERNMENTS AS EVIDENCE THAT MORE RELAXED POLICY ON JEWISH EMIGRATION DOES NOT NECESSARILY RESULT IN ADDITION OF ALL EMIGRANTS TO ISRAEL'S POPULATION.

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6. IN CONVERSATION WITH WESTERN CORRESPONDENT AND EMBOFF, PROMINENT JEWISH DISSIDENT (VITALIY RUBIN) SEEKING TO EMIGRATE TO ISRAEL RECENTLY DISPLAYED SOME ANNOYANCE AT HIGH PROPORTION OF EMIGRANTS NOW CHANGING DIRECTION. HE SAID THAT HE AND HIS FRIENDS BELIEVED EMIGRANTS SEEKING NEW LIFE AND SPIRITUAL FULFILLMENT (PRESUMABLY, SECULAR AS WELL AS RELIGIOUS) GO TO ISRAEL, WHILE THOSE WHO GO TO U.S. INSTEAD SHOW IN DOING SO THAT THEIR MOTIVATION IS MATERIALISTIC IN NATURE. RUBIN DID NOT, OF COURSE, BELIEVE EMIGRANTS SHOULD BE PREVENTED FROM GOING WHERE THEY WISH, NO DID HE SUGGEST THAT HIGH PROPORTION CHANGING DIRECTION ENDANGERS CONTINUED SOVIET TOLERANCE OF THAT PRACTICE.

7. EMBASSY WILL REPLY TO OTHER QUESTIONS RAISED REF B IN SEPTEL.
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